

days. Social Security cards are needed, though there is no penalty for not having one in your billfold. Americans who want to travel abroad do have to prove citizenship and be issued passports.

So the intrusion on personal freedom of an identification card for workers seems slight under the circumstances. And if it would be a help to employers to make sure they are not hiring illegals, and to all those officials being paid to enforce immigration laws, then it would be worthwhile.

Injustice is done to all legal immigrants and to all American citizens and taxpayers by ineffective controls. Surely the requirement for ID cards is preferable to financing higher barricades or hiring more border patrol officers.

ONE OF AMERICA'S GREATEST TREASURES

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 1997

Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of Mississippi's most outspoken heroes and one of America's greatest treasures. Although the contributions that Americans of African descent have made to this country are inexplicably woven into the very fiber of freedom and democracy upon which this country was founded, they are consistently overlooked and seldom find their place in history books alongside those of their white counterparts. However, because the recognition of these contributions has been relegated to 1 month out of the year—this month—instead of everyday, I would like to take a moment to share with you an article from "The Mississippi Link", a paper in the district I represent. This article commemorates the life of Mr. R. Jess Brown—Civil Rights pioneer and true supporter of democracy.

"R. JESS BROWN: A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO KEEP HIS MEMORY ALIVE"

(By Nettie Stowers)

SPECIAL TO THE MISSISSIPPI LINK

R. Jess Brown, a citizen of Mississippi residing in the city of Jackson, in September, 1988 was summoned by the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc. to the Nation's Capitol. Brown had been invited to attend and participate in "A Special Tribute To A Great American, The Honorable Thurgood Marshall, U.S. Supreme Court Justice" that was hosted by the Black Caucus and Foundation.

This invitation to attend and participate in the tribute was due Brown, in part, because the Jackson, Miss. attorney had been a member of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund which had also included Justice Marshall. According to the Magnolia Bar Association, in his august career, Brown "played a major role with the NAACP Legal Defense lawyers in (ending) the discrimination against Blacks in the areas of transportation and other public accommodations along with (the) Honorable Thurgood Marshall, then Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court (now deceased); (the) Honorable Constance Baker Motley and Robert L. Carter, now (both are) residing judges in the United States District Court for the State of New York; and other NAACP Legal Defense lawyers."

At this tribute, billed as "A Special Tribute To Thurgood Marshall . . . The Lifetime

Companion For Justice For All People . . .", Brown was rubbing elbows with people who held esteem for equal justice for all Americans such as Wiley Branton, Sr., Esquire, (now deceased); U.S. Representatives Louis Stokes, Michael Espy, Mervyn Dymally, Walter Fauntroy and Julian Dixon; William Coleman, Jr., former Secretary of the Department of Transportation; Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General; and AME Bishop H. H. Brookins.

Brown was accustomed to such invitations and honors: a civil rights lawyer, he had served as a member of the team lawyers who had systematically dismantled the discriminatory segregationists and "Jim Crow" laws in America, especially in the South and Mississippi. Brown's contributions to American society are a reading of U.S. History and Mississippi History.

In 1948, Brown joined Gladys Noel Bates in seeking equal salaries for black teachers in Jackson when very few, if any, blacks dared to oppose the historically white supremacy power structure in the Magnolia State. Jether Walker Brown, his widow who still lives in Jackson, said "when Jess stepped in to help Mrs. Bates, almost no one was speaking to her because of intimidation by whites. Jess stepped in and almost immediately made the Black people feel ashamed for their actions." Jether Brown went on to say that "things were not easy for him (Jess) or any of us during this time. Anyone or any group associated with helping Blacks get equal treatment "receiving death threats harassment and vindictive and cruel intimidation; this included men, women and children. This was especially true for Jess, me and our two children. Oh Lord, it wasn't easy!"

Mrs. Brown also said that her husband represented a lot of Black people in cases where Mississippi sought the death penalty; but, these Black folk were never executed because her husband would keep on appealing their cases until some judge or court would overrule Mississippi's decision to execute.

In the 1950's Brown filed the first civil rights suit in Mississippi in Jefferson Davis County seeking the enforcement of the right of Black citizens to become registered voters. He was successful in obtaining Clyde Kennard's release after Kennard was convicted for the theft of chicken feed after attempting to register to vote at Mississippi Southern University. In the 1960's, Brown was among the team of lawyers who represented James Meredith in opening the doors of Ole Miss to Blacks.

The civil rights lawyer represented Mack Charles Parker in the Circuit Court in Pearl River County, Miss., who was lynched and thrown in the Pearl River after Brown raised the jury selection question prior to Parker's trial. And, while serving as counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Brown was successful in obtaining reversals of convictions of Black defendants because discrimination against blacks in jury selection in Scott and Warren Counties.

Before Brown's untimely death in 1989, Attorney Firnst J. Alexander, Jr., assisted Brown in obtaining an acquittal for a Black defendant accused of being involved in attempted armed robbery of an alleged white victim in Neshoba County, Miss., where the alleged victim was shot.

Mrs. Brown said, "All of R. Jess' cases were important; but I'd say that lawyers in the State of Mississippi were hard to find and Mississippi had a rule that out-of-State civil rights lawyers could not come in and represent the people who were suffering and dying from discrimination—a local lawyer had to take the lead." That's how we got some of the lawyers in Mississippi whose names are a part of civil rights history like Carsie Hall, Jack Young, Sr. and others.

Brown served on the executive board of the National Bar Association, he received numerous honors and awards which includes the C. Francis Stratton Award of the National Bar Association, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Award; and, the Illinois State University Award of Achievement. Brown's fraternal affiliations included Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, the Elks, and L.K. Atwood Lodge. Brown was a member of Pratt United Methodist Church in Jackson, Mississippi.

When asked about her greatest contribution to R. Jess' and his undaunted efforts to gain equality under the law for American with African heritage, Mrs. Brown said "R. Jess was a humanitarian, educator, and fighter for civil rights. I made my contribution as a friend, wife, mother to our children and someone with whom he could confide and consult with on any subject. I have given it to R. Jess, he valued and respected my opinions and my knowledge."

AT FIRST GLANCE FACT ABOUT R. JESS BROWN

September 2, 1912—December 31, 1989.

Formal Education: Public Schools of Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Undergraduate Education: Illinois State University.

Graduate Education: Indiana University.

Legal Education: Texas Southern University School of Law.

Admitted To Practice Law: All Mississippi State Courts; U.S. District Courts for the Southern/Northern Districts of MS.

Profession: High School Teacher, College Professor, Lawyer.

Married to Jether Lee Walker Brown; Jackson, MS.

Children: Jacqueline Brown Staffney; Jackson, MS and Richard Jess Brown; Jackson, MS.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Filed the first civil rights suit in Mississippi seeking the enforcement of the right of Americans with African heritage to become registered voters.

Represented James Meredith in opening the doors of the University of Mississippi to American with African heritage with other lawyers from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

The Magnolia Bar Association (R. Jess Brown was a co-founder) presents the R. Jess Brown Award to a deserving attorney.

R. Jess Brown Park; Capitol Street; Jackson, Mississippi.

INTRODUCING THE LAND RECYCLING ACT OF 1997

HON. JAMES C. GREENWOOD

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 1997

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Land Recycling Act of 1997, legislation designed to spur economic growth in virtually every community across the country, particularly in America's urban core.

THE BROWNFIELDS EPIDEMIC

My bill is an aggressive attack on brownfields, abandoned or underutilized former industrial properties where actual or potential environmental contamination hinders redevelopment or prevents it altogether. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] estimates that there may be as many as 500,000 such sites nationwide. In my own congressional district, the southern portion of